

LIVING EXAMPLES OF IT MIGHT HAVE-BEEN.

The Story of One Very Ordinary Morning In Akron Police Court-- Glance at a Page of Life.

If Dickens could visit Akron in the flesh, he would be able to write several very interesting chapters of a novel after having attended one or two sessions of the local Police Court.

There are tales of woe and happiness to be gleaned from the very faces of the men on the prisoners' bench. Traces of better times remain on many of the grim faces upturned to the Court. Traces of tears shed in the secrecy of their narrow cells linger on the faces of some who are making their first appearance in the unhappy role of the prisoner at the bar. Defiance gleams in the eyes of some whose years would indicate that they should still be happy-faced school boys. Indifference and even lazy contentment are noticeable in the faces of many of the old offenders who are more at home in Police Court than any other place outside of jail.

How comparatively few Akron people know just what a session of the local Police Court looks like—how it is carried on—how justice is meted out to petty offenders and more dangerous criminals. Every day a different scene is presented; yet every day it is much the same as the day before, and the day before that, and so on, for years back. It is the same old story of drink, hate, jealousy, love, and the other sins and emotions to which humanity is heir, but presenting themselves in new and varied forms forever.

The other day a very ordinary little case was heard. It will do as well as any one of the hundred or more which are heard each month, on which to hang a word picture.

Mayor Young has reached the city building shortly before 8 o'clock. Mayor's Clerk A. C. Holloway has been at his desk just inside the partition which separates the court room and the hall, since 7:30. Prisonkeeper John E. Washer has marshalled from the prison on Mill st., the aggregation of offenders who are to face the Court. They sit on a long bench at the west side of the room a few feet from the Mayor's desk, also at that side of the room. They look more or less interestedly about at Chief of Police Durkin, standing near talking to Police Prosecutor C. C. Benner; and at the police officers loitering in the hall just out-

side, plainly visible through the glass and panes of the partition, at the motley crowd gathering in the narrow quarters reserved for spectators and separated from the court room by a low railing; at the newspaper reporters who come in and talk to policemen; court officials and to each other; at witnesses in different cases, who sit at the opposite side of the Court room, facing them. And among all they see there is probably not one friendly face. Sometimes they recognize the officer who made the arrest; sometimes they see those they know in the lobby, and wonder if so and so has come just to see how they will fare in Court; sometimes they see those who have come to befriend them there, and a little look of hopefulness on a prisoner's face is an almost certain sign that he has discovered such a person among the spectators or witnesses.

It is a little after 8 o'clock. The Mayor comes from his private office, sits down at his desk slightly elevated above the main floor of the court room, and glances carelessly over the court calendar on which the names of prisoners and the charges against them are recorded, before him. He picks up the files in the different cases—the large heavy envelopes containing the affidavits, warrants and other papers in each case, and glances over them, also.

There is a little stir in the court room. Court is about to open. Newspaper men take their seats at a long table facing the prisoners. Chief of Police Durkin stands near the desk of Clerk Holloway. Prosecutor Benner sits at the same table as the reporters, but at the side nearer the Mayor. Prisonkeeper Washer stands at the door leading into the hall or corridor. People in the hall crane their necks to see inside. People among the spectators look curiously at the prisoners.

"Are you ready, Your Honor?" asks Prisonkeeper Washer.

The Mayor nods his head, and with his knuckles, the Prisonkeeper wraps on the table nearest him or the ledge of the partition where folks used to mail letters when the court room was the main room of the post office. Hats off, everybody, now, Court is in session.

Mayor Young whispers to Prosecutor Benner a moment. He is asking why

this case of "John Juniper" is marked "special." He is informed that "Juniper" was more than ordinarily insolent to the officer who arrested him for intoxication and tried to use his fists. This means that, though "Juniper" may plead guilty of intoxication, some testimony will probably be taken and "Juniper" is likely to be fined more than the usual "two and costs."

"City of Akron against Peter Pole," calls the Mayor, and glances toward the prisoners' bench.

A very red faced man looks up, but shows no other sign that he heard, or that that is his name. He may have given a fictitious name when locked up and perhaps he does not remember it at once. And yet fictitious names are by no means common in Police court.

"Stand up, Pete," says Prisonkeeper Washer, who always addresses prisoners familiarly.

Pete jumps up and starts toward the Mayor's desk.

"Stand where you are," says the Mayor.

"Stand right where you are," echoes the Prisonkeeper.

"You are charged with intoxication," the Mayor continues. "Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"I was gone home, Your Honor—"

"You must plead first, and tell your story afterward, Mr. Pole," the Mayor says, somewhat impatiently.

"Guilty," says the prisoner, sinking his voice to an undertone. Pleas of guilty are always made in a low voice.

"Where do you belong?"

"I was going home and an officer arrested me. I live in the North end."

"You were drunk?"

"He was lying in the gutter, Your Honor," says the prosecutor. "He would have frozen to death if he had not been found."

"Have you ever been arrested before?" the Mayor asks.

"Once."

"When?"

"Last Fall."

"On what charge?"

"Drunk."

"It seems to me you ought to let liquor alone. Twice in Police court in six months is too much of a luxury for you or any one. I'll impose the usual fine, two dollars and costs."

Mr. Pole sits down and looks around

in a dazed sort of way. It is easy to see that he is a victim of remorse.

"State of Ohio against Fred Mills," "Stand up Fred," says the prison-keeper.

A pale, dirty-faced boy, hair uncombed, and dirty hands sticking far out from the short sleeves of his coat which might fit a younger brother, stands up. He has been sitting between the red-faced, foul-breathed Mr. Pole and a dirty vagabond who sought lodging at the City prison. Sheepishly and bashfully he hangs his head.

"You are charged with truancy," says the Mayor in a kinder tone than he usually uses.

"I quit school a year ago," says the boy, in a sulky, scarcely audible tone. "Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," he says. His voice is scarcely more than a whisper.

"Speak up, Millsy," says the prison-keeper.

"Are you ready for trial?" the court inquires.

Mills says he is.

"Is the State ready for trial?"

"Any time," says the prosecutor.

"Call your witnesses," says the court.

The prosecutor calls the names of Policeman Fred Baker, Truant Officer Chas. Watson and Mrs. Kate Mills, the boy's aunt.

"Hold up your right hands," says the court as the prosecutor tells them to stand up.

Up go their hands and up goes the Mayor's right hand.

"You all and each of you do solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in the case of the State of Ohio against Fred Mills, so help you God," the Mayor says.

Three heads nod in response and their owners then sit down.

"Mr. Watson may take the stand," says Prosecutor Benner.

Mr. Watson takes a chair close beside the Mayor's desk.

"Your name is Chas. Watson and you are the truant officer of the city of Akron?" asks the prosecutor.

Mr. Watson says that such are the facts.

"Go ahead and tell the court what you know about this case."

Thereupon Mr. Watson says that Fred Mills has been making trouble in the South End and has refused to attend school; that he was given a permit to go to work but could not hold a job; that he has no parents, few friends and is going to the dogs.

Freddy Mills begins crying and Officer Baker takes the stand. He tells much the same story as the truant officer. Mrs. Mills is called, and in telling her story incidentally tells of Fred's better qualities and of the hardships of the homeless orphan who is at the law's mercy.

Freddy Mills has no witnesses. He declines to ask any questions of the witnesses for the State when the court offers him that privilege, and between his sobs tells his own story, which in substance is that he was discharged from the "Diamond Rubber" for breaking a tire; from the "Goodrich" because there was no work, and from the "Enterprise" because he was paid only 50 cents a day; that he had to work, he knew, and was looking for a job; that he could take care of himself if they would only let him alone.

"How much do you think you ought to earn?" asks the court.

"Seventy-five cents," Fred answers.

"No job at all is better than 50 cents a day, is it?"

Fred declines to answer.

"I should like to have your opinion

Mr. Mills as to what we are to do

with this boy," the Mayor says.

"I don't know," Mrs. Mills replies.

"I want to do my duty to make a man of you, Fred," the Mayor goes on. "If you will go to the home at Buffalo you will be taught a trade and have a pleasant place to stay. Or you will have to go to the Lancaster Industrial school, called the Reform Farm."

"I want to stay here," blubbers Fred, but it ends by his being bound over to Probate court while he decides between Buffalo and Lancaster.

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"City of Akron against John Juniper," he calls.

A thin, vicious looking man stands up, leaning forward toward the Mayor, a horrible leer on his face.

And so it goes—day in day out—humor cropping out here and there, but the pathos outweighing it two to one. Some see in the miserable creatures who make up the bulk of the Police court only a lot of "bums"—"hoboes"—call them what you will. Those who look below the surface, see in them the stamp of the sorrowful "It might have been."

Mr. Juniper receives his sentence with calm contempt. The vagabond hitherto referred to attempts to be funny in the face of a sentence to the stone pile. A young man with hollow eyes and every mark of dissipation on his face, pleads not guilty of stealing a pint of whisky. The State's witnesses are not present and Prosecutor Benner asks that the case be continued to the next day. This is done. A case continued from the day before is quickly disposed of. The prisoner having had time to sober up, changing his plea to guilty.

"Anything further?" inquires the Mayor.

"That is all," answers the prosecutor.

"Court is adjourned," His Honor declares. Slowly the spectators shuffle out. The Mayor talks to the Chief of Police or the newspaper men. The prosecutor lights a cigar and talks to the prisonkeeper. Clerk Holloway prepares for business. Those who have been fined are soon conducted by the prisonkeeper to Clerk Holloway's desk. He collects the fines from them and the costs. He turns over to them the property taken from them—usually a scant quantity—when they were locked up, and makes them sign their names in receipt thereof. In the meantime the prisonkeeper is taking back to the prison those who have time sentences to serve or those who, for other reasons have not gained their liberty. Police officers have quickly disappeared. The Mayor puts on his coat and goes away. Others soon depart also, and in 15 minutes no one remains save Clerk Holloway and an old man who has just come in to see whether his son has been in court. For

BRIEF REVIEW

Of What Has Been Done by the N. O. T. Company.

Splendid Record For Progress During the Past Two Years.

Not until May will it have been two years since the property of the Akron Street Railway and Illuminating Co. became the property of the company which has been developed into the Northern Ohio Traction Co. In these two years, however, the progress made in securing for Akron and vicinity one of the best street railway systems in this country, has been almost marvelous. It is only when looking backward that the people of this city realize fully what has been done for them by this company. At no time since its assuming management of the lines has the company given employment to less than 300 men, and at present it employs, on an average 400 men. Were people to consider all the improvements made by this company, and the large expense connected with doing so, they would be ready to congratulate the company upon the progress it has made, and give it encouragement while it is progressing further.

At the time the property was acquired by new owners its name was changed to The Akron Traction and Electric Co. Two months later, the Akron Traction and Electric Co. was capitalized at \$1,000,000, and The Akron Traction and Electric Co., \$2,000,000, the combined capitalization being \$3,000,000. Now the capitalization is \$3,500,000, having been increased \$500,000 when the Rapid Transit property was purchased. The company now has a trackage of 30 miles, acquiring 40 miles by consolidating with the A. B. & C. line, and acquiring 20 miles by purchasing the Rapid Transit property.

When the company first acquired local property, all of the cars were in bad condition. The company has placed in service 35 new cars, and all

old cars have been rebuilt, repainted and equipped with new machinery. A large number of old cars have been sold or broken up. During the past two years, the company has, besides improving old tracks, built fifteen miles of new track, in and about Akron, and double-tracked 17 miles of the A. B. & C. line.

Among improvements made have been the renewing of several lines in this city, double-tracking East Market st., and laying a lot of new track on Main st. New double-track has been laid on Mill st., and the line to Lakeside park from South Main st., has also been double-tracked. West Exchange st., from Bowery, east to the railroad crossing, has been double-tracked. A new single track has been laid on West Exchange st., from Bowery to Maple st. New railroad crossings and curves have been supplied on the loop line. A new track has been laid on College st., also on Spier st. The line to Cuyahoga Falls has been double-tracked all but one-half mile.

The capacity of the power house has been increased largely—when new machinery now ordered has been installed the capacity of the power house will have been increased 350 per cent. The company has greatly improved the casino at Lakeside park, and made the Gorge a popular and pleasant resort. It will make improvements at Randolph park, and cause the resort to be more popular than ever during next season.

What the company has in view for the coming season has already been given so much publicity that nothing further need be said, other than that a line will be built from Akron to Canton via Turkeyfoot lake, also a line from Kent to Ravenna, and a new line to Barberton, besides making many important improvements.

the boy failed to go home the night before and the old man, wondering—fearing, breathes a sign when he is told that his son has not been in court.

Slowly he turns away. The clerk resumes his writing—his history of the transgressors of a city's people—and all is quiet.

Says I
to myself
says I—

Uneeda
Biscuit

And so says everybody who ever
enjoyed the nutriment of this
famous biscuit.

Sold only in airtight packages.

National Biscuit Company.



WALKER'S
SOAP

Is good soap

Contains no alkali

Be sure you get the soap with the
game rooster on the wrapper. We take
the trouble to wash all the free alkali out
of WALKER'S SOAP. That saves your
clothes, paint, varnish, hands—anything
you wash that alkali would eat.

